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(71) Applicant: WALKER ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP [US/US]; Five High Ridge Park, Stamford, CT 06905 (US).

(72) Inventors: WALKER, Jay, S.; 124 Spectacle Lane, Ridgefield, CT 06877 (US). SCHNEIER, Bruce; 101 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55419 (US). SPARICO, Thomas, M.; 115 Lockwood Road, Riverside, CT 06878 (US). CASE, T., Scott; 29 Anthony Lane, Darien, CT 06820 (US). JORASCH, James, A.; Apartment 5G, 25 Forest Street, Stamford, CT 06901 (US). VAN LUCHENE, Andrew, S.; 13-2a Clarmore Drive, Norwalk, CT 06850 (US). TEDESCO, Daniel, E.; 88 Barn Hill Road, Monroe, CT 06468 (US). JINDAL, Sanjay, K.; 52 Village Walk, Wilton, CT 06897 (US). WEIR-JONES, Toby; 3A 65 Prospect Street, Stamford, CT 06901 (US). LECH, Robert, R.; 3 Valley View Drive #25, Norwalk, CT 06851 (US).

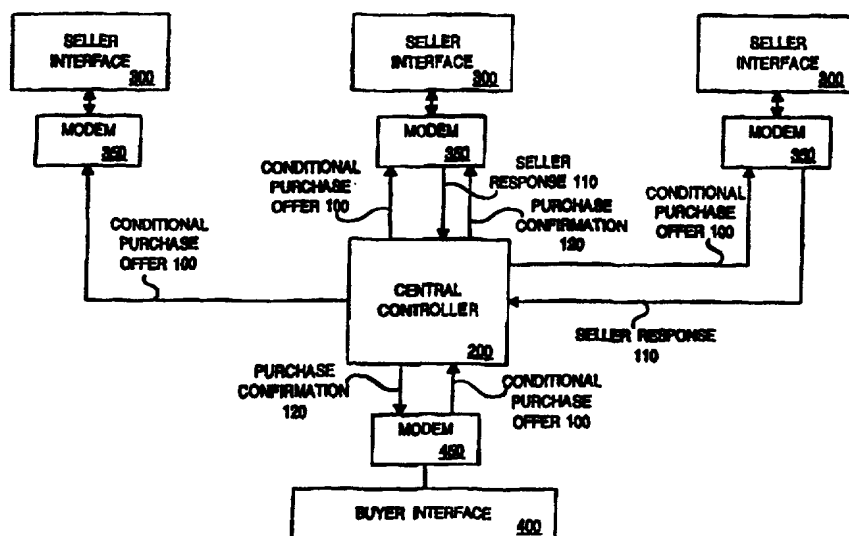
(74) Agents: HUGHES, Chris, A. et al.; Morgan & Finnegan, L.L.P., 345 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10154 (US).

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Published

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Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.*

(54) Title: CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



(57) Abstract

The present invention is a method and apparatus for effectuating bilateral buyer-driven commerce. The present invention allows prospective buyers (400) or sellers (300), for sellers conveniently to search for relevant buyer purchase offers, and for sellers potentially to bind a buyer to a contract based on the buyer's purchase offer. In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus of the present invention includes a controller (200) that receives binding purchase offers from prospective buyers. The controller makes purchase offers available to potential sellers and then determines if one or more sellers are willing to accept a given purchase offer. The method and apparatus of the present invention have applications on the Internet as well as conventional communications systems such as voice telephony.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US97/15492

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) : G06F 17/60; H04L 9/00

US CL : 705/5, 6, 26, 28, 37, 38, 39, 44; 380/23, 24, 25, 49;

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/5, 6, 26, 28, 37, 38, 39, 44; 380/23, 24, 25, 49;

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X,P	US 5,557,518 A (ROSEN) 17 September 1996, see entire document.	1-81, 84-92, 96-112, 124-157
X --- Y	Laura Del Rosso "Marketel Says it Plans to Launch Air Fare 'Auction' in June" Travel; Weekly, 29 April 1991, see entire document.	1-51, 57-71, 73-86, 96-121, 126-136, 154-157 ----- 52-56
X -- Y	US 4,799,156 A (SHAVIT et al.) 17 January 1989, see entire document.	1-81, 84-92, 96-112, 124-136, 154-157 ----- 137-153

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	*T*	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	*X*	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
E earlier document published on or after the international filing date	*Y*	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*Z*	document member of the same patent family
O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search

16 DECEMBER 1997

Date of mailing of the international search report

10 FEB 1998

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Box PCT
Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer
PINCHUS M. LAUFER

Telephone No. (703) 306-4177

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US97/15492

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4,903,201 A (WAGNER) 20 February 1990, see entire document.	1-15, 18-20, 22-36, 64-70, 126-133, 135, 154, and 155
A	US 5,191,613 A (GRAZIANO et al.) 02 March 1993.	71-79
X	US 5,021,953 A (WEBBER et al.) 04 June 1991, see entire document.	52-56, 82, 83, 85-95
Y	US 5,262,941 A (SALADIN et al.) 16 November 1993, see entire document.	137-153 and 157
Y	US 5,404,291 A (KERR et al.) 04 April 1995, see entire document.	52-56
A	US 5,361,199 A (SHOQUIST et al.) 01 November 1994.	1-112, 126-157
A	US 5,329,589 A (FRASER et al.) 12 July 1994.	1-112, 126-157
X,P	US 5,611,052 A (DYKSTRA et al.) 11 March 1997, see entire document.	137-153

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
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Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This international report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

Please See Extra Sheet.

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

☐
☐

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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BOX II. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION WAS LACKING

This ISA found multiple inventions as follows:

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be searched, the appropriate additional search fees must be paid.

Group 1, claims 1- 51, 57-81, 84*, 96-123; 126-136 and 154-157, drawn to Methods and Devices for consummating binding contracts and for processing sales

Group 2, claims 52-56, drawn to inventory allocation and revenue management

Group 3, claims 82*, 83, 93-95: Drawn to Means to Deconstruct package into Components

Group 4, claims 124-125, drawn to an Authentication Device

Group 5, claims 137-153, drawn to Loan Processing

* Claims 85-92 are grouped with independent claims 82-84

Groups 1-5 are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention 1 has separate utility such as consummating a binding contract, Invention 2 has separate utility such as revenue management, Invention 3 has separate utility for determining which elements are within a package, Invention 4 has separate utility as a means for authenticating the validity of tickets, and Invention 5 has separate utility as a loan processor.